

Arizona continues to pay a heavy and unfair price for the federal government's failure to secure our borders and fix our broken immigration system. As you may know, illegal immigration affects Arizona more than it does any other state. More than half of all illegal crossings over the U.S.-Mexico border happen here in Arizona. Congressman Mitchell believe that this is unacceptable.

Congressman Mitchell wrote to President Obama and urged him not to sue Arizona because of our new law, SB 1070, and instead focus his administration's efforts on securing the border and helping fix our broken immigration system. Congressman Mitchell is extremely disappointed that the Justice Department has filed suit and believes the new state law reflects Arizonans' justified frustration with the federal government's failure to secure the border and fix our broken immigration system, and if it finally spurs Washington to act, then it is a good thing. However, neither the new law nor a lawsuit to stop it is going to solve the underlying problem of inadequate border security and a broken immigration system.

Congressman Mitchell also believes that disparaging calls to boycott Arizona are not only shortsighted, they are detrimental to our local economy.

Since coming to Congress in 2007, Congressman Mitchell has been working to help secure our borders and improve federal enforcement, without which immigration reform will never work. He has supported funding for thousands of additional Border Patrol agents and resources for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Mitchell has repeatedly urged both Presidents George W. Bush and Obama to place more National Guard troops on the border, and offered legislation to require it, including a bill with Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., to immediately deploy a minimum of 3,000 additional National Guard troops to the border.

Additionally, to combat the epidemic of drop houses in the Valley, which are often operated by dangerous Mexican drug cartels as way stations for drug and human-smuggling operations, Congressman Mitchell introduced a bi-partisan bill with Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-Calif.): The Stop the Drop Houses Act, H.R. 5769

. If enacted, the legislation would close a federal loophole and allow authorities to use civil forfeiture to seize homes used as drop houses. Under current law, civil forfeiture can be used to seize other property used to facilitate smuggling crimes, such as vehicles or even airplanes. However, civil forfeiture cannot be used against the actual homes used as drop houses. The bill would not change the existing "innocent owner's defense" against civil forfeiture.

VIDEO: KPNX-TV, Channel 12: [Stop the Drop Houses Act: Mitchell Tours Drop House, Kidnapping Site](#)

The crime and violence associated with drop houses and illegal drug cartels is why, back in February of 2008, Mitchell asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the nonpartisan investigative arm of Congress, to investigate Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) efforts to shut down these drop houses and stop the illegal smuggling.

The results of the two and a half year investigation were released in July 2010 at a House Committee on Homeland Security hearing.

VIDEO: KTVK-TV, Channel 3: [Congressional Hearing on Alien Smuggling](#)

Among the findings, GAO recommended closing the federal loophole to allow authorities to use civil forfeiture to seize homes that are used as drop houses in order to improve ICE's efforts to combat alien smuggling - exactly what the Stop the Drop Houses Act would do.

Since taking office, Congressman Mitchell has advocated for increased border security measures. Below is a sample of those efforts:

2007

- Voted for the creation of a new Border Intelligence Fusion Center that would assist in producing border-related intelligence for Arizona law enforcement officers. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), January 8, 2007]

- Hosted an immigration and law enforcement roundtable to discuss smuggling, drug trafficking and other crimes associated with illegal immigration. [Sources: [East Valley Tribune](#), May 28, 2007; [The Arizona Republic](#) and

[Associated Press](#)

, May 29, 2007]

- Voted for funding to hire 3,000 new Border Patrol agents, make it easier to deport illegal immigrants who have committed crimes, and restore critical grants that will strengthen Arizona's homeland security. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), June 14, 2007]

- Voted to boost the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, or SCAAP, which provides federal assistance to cash-strapped state and local agencies that are forced to divert resources from public safety services to deal with illegal immigrants. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), July 25, 2007]

- Wrote to President Bush to ask him to extend the National Guard's deployment as part of Operation Jump Start. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), August 9, 2007]

- Voted to significantly boost border security efforts, including funding for fencing, infrastructure, technology. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), December 17, 2007]

2008

- Offered an amendment that would strengthen border security technology through the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) to assist in border security efforts. [[Mitchell Release](#), February 6, 2008]

- Requested the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to examine federal efforts to identify and remove criminal aliens and combat drop houses which act as way stations for drugs and humans smuggled across the border [[Mitchell Release](#), February 20, 2008]

- Joined Reps. Gabrielle Giffords, Jeff Flake, Trent Franks, Rick Renzi and John Shadegg in writing to President Bush asking him to extend the National Guard's deployment as part of Operation Jump Start. [Sources: [Mitchell Release](#), May 7, 2008; [Green Valley News & Sun](#), May 21, 2008]

- Offered an amendment to the Defense Authorization Act to extend Operation Jump Start's deployment of National Guard troops at the border [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), May 20, 2008]

- Voted for the Merida Initiative to Combat Narcotics Act to combat Mexican and Central American drug trafficking by beefing up law enforcement on both sides of the border. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), June 9, 2008]

- Introduced legislation to help ensure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement has the resources it needs to enforce our nation's immigration laws. [Source: [Mitchell](#)

[Release](#)
30, 2008]

, July

2009

- Wrote to President Obama to request National Guard troops be placed on the border. [Source: [Letter to President](#), March 25, 2009]
- Offered a bipartisan amendment to stop a proposed 25 percent cut in federal funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). SCAAP provides federal assistance to cash-strapped state and local agencies that are forced to divert resources from public safety services to deal with illegal immigrants. [Sources: [The Arizona Republic](#), June 15, 2009; [a Capitol Times](#), June 17, 2009; [Sierra Vista Herald](#), June 23, 2009]

- Called upon President Obama to send more than just 1,500 National Guard troops to the border. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), July 6, 2009]
- Teamed with Rep. Brian Bilbray (R-CA) to secure millions of dollars in additional funding for security improvements at the border. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), October 29, 2009]

2010

- Wrote to President Obama, again, to request additional National Guard troops be placed on the border. [Source: [Letter to the President](#), March 30, 2010]
- Wrote to the head of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, urging him to expedite the agency's cooperation with a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation requested by Mitchell on federal efforts to identify and remove criminal aliens. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), April 26, 2010]
- Introduced Deploy National Guard Troops to the Border Act, bipartisan legislation to deploy a minimum of 3,000 additional National Guard troops to the border. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#), May 21, 2010]
- Wrote to House Appropriations Chairman David Obey asking for funding for at least 3,000 additional National Guard troops on the border. [[Letter to Chairman Obey](#), May

24, 2010]

- Introduced a bipartisan amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for FY2011 to deploy a minimum of 3,000 additional National Guard troops to the border.

[Source: [Mitchell Release](#) , May 25, 2010]

- Following President Obama's announcement of placing additional 1,200 National Guard troops at the border, Mitchell called for additional guardsmen and resources to secure border. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#) , May 25, 2010]

- Wrote to President Obama, again, to request his Administration not sue to block Arizona's new immigration law from going into effect. [Source: [Letter to the President](#) , June 21, 2010]

- Wrote to House Armed Services Chairman Ike Skelton urging him to include a provision in the National Defense Authorization Act. [Source: Letter to Chairman Skelton, June 29, 2010]

- Spoke on House floor, urging President not to sue Arizona to overturn SB 1070. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#) , June 21, 2010]

- Introduced Stop the Drop House Act, bipartisan legislation to close a federal loophole and allow authorities to use civil forfeiture to seize homes used for criminal smuggling operations. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#) , July 19, 2010]

- Received results of a two and a half year Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation, requested by Rep. Mitchell, at a Congressional hearing. Among the recommendations was a call to close a federal loophole to allow authorities to use civil forfeiture to seize homes used for criminal smuggling operations. [Source: [Mitchell Release](#) , July 22, 2010]